DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 424 706 EC 306 794

TITLE	World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons. Third Review and Appraisal.
INSTITUTION	United Nations, New York, NY. Dept. of Economic and Social Affairs.
PUB DATE	1997-00-00
NOTE	12p.
AVAILABLE FROM	United Nations Secretariat, Division for Social Policy and Development, Room DC2-1342, New York, NY 10017.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
JOURNAL CIT	Disabled Persons Bulletin; n3 p1-11 1997
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Accessibility (for Disabled); Adults; Children; *Civil Rights; *Disabilities; *Disability Discrimination; Equal Opportunities (Jobs); Foreign Countries; Incidence; International Communication; *International Cooperation; International Organizations; *International Programs; World Problems
IDENTIFIERS	*United Nations

ABSTRACT

At its 52nd session, the United Nations General Assembly considered the report of the Secretary-General on the review and appraisal of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled People, and 44 governments sponsored a draft resolution of further action. The draft was adopted by the Assembly on December 12, 1997. The resolution includes the following recommendations, which: (1) encourage governments and the non-governmental community to examine key social and economic policy issues related to the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities; (2) urge governments to cooperate with the Statistics Division of the Secretariat in the continued development of global statistics and indicators; (3) urge relevant bodies and organizations of the United Nations' system to work together in the promotion of the rights of person with disabilities by sharing experiences and findings on disability issues; (4) invite governments, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to continue support to the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Disability; and (5) request the Secretary-General to develop a plan to increase the accessibility of the United Nations and its offices to persons with disabilities. (CR)

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ED 424 706

DISABLED PERSONS BULLETIN

No. 3, 1997

Introduction

This issue focuses on the third review and appraisal of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons and the 1997 International Day of Disabled Persons. At its fifty-second session, in 1997, the General Assembly considered the report of the Secretary-General on the third review and appraisal. There was a lively and productive debate on the topic; 44 Governments sponsored a draft resolution on further action and suggested privatization in the disability field. The draft was adopted by the Assembly on 12 December 1997, as resolution 52/82.

The 1997 observance of the International Day of Disabled Persons, on 3 December, had as its theme arts, sports and persons with disabilities. It involved for the first time an extensive series of exchanges in cyberspace via the Internet.

Third review and appraisal of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons

It will be recalled that the World Programme states in its first paragraph that its purpose is:

". . . to promote effective measures for prevention of disability, rehabilitation and the realization of the goals of 'full participation' of persons with disabilities in social life and development and of 'equality'".

The third review and appraisal covers the period 1983-1992. It has three objectives: to review and assess issues and trends in disability policies and programmes since the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992); to document initiatives of Governments, non-governmental organizations and the United Nations since 1992 which have interacted with selected disability issues and trends and to review and assess their implications for Programme implementation; and to submit recommendations to implement further the World Programme to the year 2000 and beyond. The review considers options for improved policy design, programme implementation monitoring, and evaluation, including development of data, statistics and indicators.

Data sources for the third review and appraisal include country-level data collected by the Statistics Division of the United Nations Secretariat for the United Nations Disability Statistics database, survey data collected in 1995 for the second-round monitoring report of the Special Rapporteur on Disability of the Commission for Social Development, data collected by the International Labour Organization to monitor Convention 159 (on vocational education and promotion of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities), data collected by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on issues and trends in special needs education, and other official United Nations documents.

Conclusions and lessons learned

The data available for the third review and appraisal suggest widespread policy-level support for the goals and objectives of the World Programme. The Special Rapporteur on

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Disability of the Commission for Social Development notes, for instance, that 85 per cent of Governments responding to his 1995 second-round monitoring questionnaire reported the existence of a national disability policy.

Moreover, the decision of member States of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to identify the period 1993-2002 as the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons provides an important time-frame in which to plan and coordinate regional action to further the World Programme's goals of full participation and equality.

A major lesson of the implementation experience since the end of the Decade is the recognition of the need to address disability issues in the context of overall development and with reference to a broader human rights framework.This is evident from the observed shift in policy emphasis from the integration of disabled persons into social life and development to their full participation in mainstream development. Participation in development and the adoption of human rights approaches raise issues of empowerment and of environmental factors which can facilitate or impede participation by all. Concern with a broader human rights framework reflects growing recognition that addressing both the social, economic and cultural rights and the civil and political rights of persons with disabilities advances the rights of all. Participation in development and human rights thus represent a means and an end of the World Programme, a view which also finds support in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development.

A second lesson has been the expansion of constituencies concerned with disability issues. In addition to action by Governments, which are traditionally addressed in international development instruments, there have been significant initiatives related to persons with disabilities by the non-governmental community and the private sector (including foundations). This trend suggests the importance of policy coherence and of modal neutrality in the design of practical action to further the equalization-of-opportunities objective of the World Programme. Policy coherence in this sense refers to the need to present the full participation and equality goals within a framework that can accommodate short-term differences in policy preferences which may arise among the various sets of development agents. Modal neutrality refers to policies and plans that promote local initiative and flexibility in decisions on programme implementation modalities.

A third lesson is the continued validity of the substantive content and the multidimensional character of the World Programme. Its clear and concise goals—full participation and equity—and three specific objectives—prevention, rehabilitation and equalization of opportunities—are reflected widely in current policies of Governments and find reference as well as in selected country cooperation frameworks of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The World Programme also provides an effective framework for addressing issues and trends that have emerged since the end of the Decade, from the disability perspective. For instance, recent developments in information and telecommunications technologies have contributed to the creation of virtual communities of interest in the disability field, a finding which is consistent with the accessibility and the institutional development concerns of the World Programme. Virtual communities represent important means to implement further the goals of the Programme in the third millennium.

One issue that has emerged since the end of the Decade but which did not receive detailed attention in the World Programme is the relationship between population ageing, impairment and disability. The latest population projections of the United Nations indicate that significant increases will occur in both the number and percentage of older persons in all regions beyond the year 2000, so this trend has important and immediate implications for policy design. Current projections indicate that the percentage of the world's population aged 65 and above will increase by some 50 per cent, to 9 per cent of the world's population in 2020, from an estimated 6.5 per cent in 1995. Over the same period the average age of the world's population will increase to 31 years in 2020, from 25 years in 1995. Moreover, infant mortality is projected to decrease by 50 per cent, to 31 per 1,000 births in 2020, from 62 per 1,000 births in 1995, and life expectancy at birth is projected to increase to 69 years in 2020, from 63 years in 1995. Since, according to data from the Disability Statistics database, the incidence of impairments and disability increases significantly with age, these projections suggest that over the next generation there will be substantial increases in the number of persons who may spend their lives with some impairment or disability. An urgent need thus exists to examine options to make environments accessible to all so that they are able to participate on the basis of equality in social life and development. An associated need is to develop alternative frameworks for the organization and delivery of essential services in the year 2000 and beyond which can not only effectively support independent living but which are capable of responding to changes over the life cycle, are community-based and involve the beneficiaries in the determination of service needs, priorities and equitable cost-recovery measures.

Recommendations

Information on the implementation of the Programme since the end

of the Decade suggests the continued validity of the Programme as a framework for advocacy and policy design. The data do not indicate any significant lacunae which would require a commitment of resources for specific research and analysis work on concepts, instruments or strategies. The data do suggest the importance of coherence in policy designs so that they contribute to the full participation and equality goals of the World Programme, and of modal neutrality when formulating implementation options. Recommendations emerging from the review thus focus on two sets of issues: suggested priorities in policy design and programme implementation strategies, and suggested resource allocations to strengthen capacities to further implement the World Programme.

Experience strongly suggests that effective implementation strategies link disability issues with overall development variables within the broader human rights framework of the United Nations. Rather than focus on the needs of persons with disabilities as a specific social group, the disability perspective on development reflects concern with the broad set of social, economic and environmental factors that will contribute to the attainment of a society for all by 2010. The broader human rights framework introduces concern with empowerment and with accessibility, both of which are essential for equalization of opportunities and self-reliance.

Experience further suggests four strategic areas in which action and resource commitments would contribute to improved capacities to further implement the goals and objectives of the World Programme. These areas, discussed below, are data and statistics on disability, indicators on monitoring and evaluation, methods and procedures of inclusive planning, and capacity-building for the disability perspective.

Data and statistics on disability

Current and reliable data are essential for policy formulation and evaluation from the disability perspective. Improvements in the body of data on disability and in statistical methodologies have been made since the end of the Decade, although the body of data is currently somewhat limited for purposes of comparative analysis. Data collection programmes now in place and under development in developing countries provide extensive opportunities to promote the use of new statistical concepts and methods and the compilation of disability statistics and indicators. Specifically, the year 2000 round of population censuses and revised census recommendations of the United Nations, which for the first time cover disability as well as the further development of the topic of disability in national household surveys, will make possible substantial improvements in the availability of statistics on disability for analysis and planning at all levels as well as for the projected fourth quinquennial review and appraisal of the World Programme, in 2002. With such considerations in place, technical cooperation, training and exchanges of information over the next few years can make a critical difference in the development of disability statistics in countries. In addition, the United Nations disability statistics database represents an essential United Nations system-wide resource for monitoring progress at the international level with regard to the situation of persons with disabilities in countries. The disability statistics database also provides a framework which countries can use in the preparation of their own national statistical databases. Consequently, work by the Statistics Division on version 2 of the disability statistics database should be appropriately strengthened on an urgent basis.

Indicators for monitoring and evaluation

It is possible to identify three main topics for further work on indicators to the year 2000: identification of indicators for short- and medium-term targets for equalization of opportunities; incorporation of environmental variables in the revisions being proposed for the International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps; and identification of indicators that link selected legal and policy instruments concerning equalization of opportunities.

Methods and procedures of inclusive planning

Experience since the end of the Decade suggests three priorities for methodological work relating to equalization of opportunities: work on conceptual and analytical bases of policy design, programme planning and evaluation from the disability perspective; methods and procedures of environmental assessment from the disability perspective; and disability-sensitive methods and procedures in statistical analysis, interpretation and presentation of findings.

Capacity-building for the disability perspective

Growing concern with the disability perspective on development and emergence of new constituencies for disability action introduce an urgent need for information, outreach and strengthening of capacities, with special reference to the equalization of opportunities for all. At the level of the United Nations system, there is need to build proactive capacities for the disability perspective in the social and economic sectors, including activities of the United Nations system for development cooperation. In additional to specialized training and orientation of concerned staff so that they are better able to assist and advise Governments in this area, there is an

urgent need for practical guidelines on inclusive approaches to planning, programming and evaluation of technical cooperation activities.

The data suggest an urgent need for capacity-building and institutional development for the disability perspective at the national level, although the heterogeneous set of communities of interest in the disability field means that this is best approached in terms of carefully structured outreach, information exchange and skill development activities for each interested group. For instance, major topics of concern to Governments could include strengthening of capacities and institutions to conduct inclusive-situation analyses, to formulate options and identify priorities that would best yield improvements in well-being and livelihoods for all. For the non-governmental community, a major topic of concern could be strengthening policy analysis, planning and negotiation capacities better to advance the agenda of specific social groups within the framework of a society for all. Information and outreach among private-sector organizations might focus on the social value of initiatives that promote equalization of opportunities for all.

Effective capacity-building initiatives require access to timely and relevant data and information on disability issues and trends, in particular, and development information resources, in general. Continued expansion of the opportunities to access data and information resources of the United Nations via its Internet home page on the World Wide Web (http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/) will have an important contribution to make in this regard. Development and wide dissemination of adaptive technologies are equally essential to promoting development participation and sustainable livelihoods for all. Provision of information in digital format via the Internet not only facilitates increased and expanded use of United Nations and other development information resources by persons with disabilities but offers low-cost and reliable access to those considerable information resources for all.

Trends in policies and programmes from the disability perspective

The disability perspective on development

The General Assembly, in adopting the World Programme of Action, took care to define equality for persons with disabilities on a parity with opportunities for those of the entire population. Parity in this sense is viewed not as a static phenomenon but as one that would be fostered and maintained as countries engaged in economic and social development. The resolution envisages what can be termed the "disability perspective" on development when considering options to further the goals and objectives of the World Programme of Action.

There is growing recognition in the period since the Decade of the importance of addressing disability issues as an integral part of national development policies and programmes. Such recognition may be due to increases in both the absolute number of disabled persons and the percentage of the population with a disability in many countries. Moreover, as countries develop, they not only create new forms of societal structures but replace existing structures, better to reflect new approaches and the needs of larger and more diverse populations in an efficient and effective manner. Thus, in recent years many disability advocates have urged that increased attention be accorded universal design approaches, which are defined as the planning and creation of environments that accommodate the needs of the entire population. For instance, application of universal design approaches in educational policies and programmes will save countries the expenses associated with making schools and the school environment accessible to children with disabilities. This will also save on costs associated with institutionalizing people throughout their lives. An equally important consideration is that universal designs benefit student populations as a whole.

Issues in integration and mainstreaming of persons with disabilities

Universal approaches represent a relatively new trend in the disability field. They also reflect fundamental concerns of the United Nations with both the social, economic and cultural rights and the civil and political rights of persons with disabilities. These concerns obtained added emphasis during the 1970s with the adoption by the General Assembly of declarations on the rights of persons with disabilities. The goals of the World Programme—full and effective participation of disabled persons and equality—reflect a concern with the rights of persons with disabilities, and the United Nations Standard Rules direct special attention to measures to promote the rights of disabled persons.

The period since the Decade has witnessed increased attention being accorded to the participation of persons with disabilities in development, to a disability perspective in policies and plans, and to placement of disability issues in a broader human rights framework. Development participation in this sense represents both a means and an end. As used in the World Programme of Action, the term pertains to three concepts: involvement in development decision-making, contributing to development efforts, and equal sharing in the results of development. International development conferences held during the 1990s have addressed the situation of persons with disabilities with reference to a range of substantive concerns and not as issues centred on disability. The human rights of persons

with disabilities are now recognized to be less the concern of a social group with particular needs and increasingly the prerequisite for advancing the rights of all.

This pattern is also evident in contemporary approaches to disability action. Traditional social welfare approaches, characterized by an emphasis on providing assistance to persons with disabilities to adapt to "normal" societal structures, are increasingly being supplanted by human rights approaches, which focus on the empowerment of persons with disabilities and on modifications required of environments to facilitate equalization of opportunities for all. The human rights approach in this sense reflects the complementarity between the social, economic and cultural rights on the one hand, and the civil and political rights on the other, of persons with disabilities.

The application of human rights approaches to the prevention and rehabilitation objectives of the World Programme is evident in the increased attention now being accorded to beneficiary choice, access to service alternatives and environmental factors. For instance, rules 2, 3 and 4 of the Standard Rules, on medical care, rehabilitation and support services, respectively, outline options that States may consider to ensure effective provision of services to persons with disabilities. The measures outlined include several basic environmental issues: the role of community-level information and outreach, beneficiary participation in decisions on services, and community involvement in service delivery and management. Social welfare professionals, as members of multidisciplinary teams, make particular contributions to this process by empowering persons with disabilities and their families to participate as informed consumers—not as passive recipients—of services that aim at improving livelihoods and well-being.

The increased attention paid to human rights approaches to disability has led to the recognition of their role as both a means and an end of the World Programme of Action. Concern with the full and effective participation of persons with disabilities in the development mainstream has resulted in an increased focus on environmental factors that can facilitate or impede implementation of the three Programme objectives: prevention, rehabilitation, and equalization of opportunities. Environmental factors affect all. In this sense, environmental factors include the development setting for participation, accessibility issues and the differential impacts that individuals may experience as they interact with their environment. Several environmental factors are considered in Rules 5 to 12 of the Standard Rules: accessibility, education, empowerment, income maintenance and social security, family life and personal integrity, culture, recreation and sports, and religion, respectively.

International policy instruments adopted since 1992

Within a year after the Decade, the General Assembly adopted two additional instruments in the field of disability: the Long-term Strategy to Implement the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons to the year 2000 and Beyond, and the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.

In addition, member States of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific identified the period 1993-2002 as the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, with the theme "Promotion of the full participation and equality of people with disabilities".

The Long-term Strategy presents a framework for collaborative action at national, regional and international levels to achieve the aim expressed by the General Assembly in resolution 48/99 of a society for all by the year 2010. The Strategy outlines a sequence of suggested actions by interested Governments for the period 1995-2010, together with associated targets, time-frames for action and an ancillary set of support measures at regional and international levels to realize that aim.

The Special Rapporteur on Disability of the Commission for Social Development notes, in his second monitoring report on implementation of the Standard Rules, the way in which the Rules complement the World Programme by their focus on furthering the objective of equalization of opportunities. The 22 rules are in three categories: preconditions for equal participation, target areas for equal participation, and implementation measures; they also include an independent monitoring mechanism.

A third disability instrument, on special education, was elaborated in 1994 at the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality, which was organized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in cooperation with the Government of Spain (Salamanca, 7-10 June 1994). The Conference adopted the Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education and the Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, which contains guidelines for action at national, regional and international levels to further the education of all children.

Each of these post-Decade instruments is significant by its emphasis on country-level action with reference to specific objectives and associated implementation monitoring mechanisms concerning the situation of persons with disabilities, the gender perspective, beneficiary-centred approaches, and a life-cycle focus on children with disabilities, from their full participation in the formal educational system to their active involvement in decisions on changes over the life cycle due to age or socio-economic circumstances.

Treatment of disability issues by recent United Nations conferences

International conferences organized by United Nations since the end of the Decade have addressed the situation of disabled persons as a substantive concern in the context of human rights, development and demographic change, social policies and development, women and shelter. The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 14-25 June 1993) includes in its chapter on equality, dignity and tolerance a specific section on the rights of disabled persons. The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 5-13 September 1994) addresses the situation of persons with disabilities as a specific section of its chapter on the family, its roles, rights, composition and structure. The Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995) notes that people with disabilities are often forced into poverty, unemployment and social isolation. The Summit's Programme of Action addresses disability issues in three main chapters on the eradication of poverty, the expansion of productive employment and reduction of unemployment, and social integration. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 4-15 September 1995), addressed the situation of women who face barriers to advancement and empowerment because of disability or other factors. Strategic objective B.1(a) of the Platform for Action urges Governments to advance equal access to education through measures to eliminate discrimination on the basis of both gender and disability. The Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements and the Habitat Agenda, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), includes in its commitment on adequate shelter for all the objective of designing and implementing standards that provide accessibility also to persons with disabilities, in accordance with the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities.

Progress achieved and obstacles encountered

Progress that can be attributed to the Long-term Strategy

It might be recalled that in his second review and appraisal of the World Programme of Action, in 1992, the Secretary-General noted that, despite concerted action at the national and international levels, the data available suggested that progress in attaining Programme objectives had been slow. Similar findings emerge from a major study on human rights and disabled persons, prepared by the Special Rapporteur for the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, of the Commission on Human Rights. Both reports noted that one achievement of the Decade had been the provision of information which had contributed to an increased understanding and awareness of disability issues and of the situation of persons with disabilities.

By resolution 47/88, the General Assembly took note of the second round of monitoring of the implementation of the Secretary-General's report on the World Programme and reaffirmed the validity and value of the Programme to serve as a firm and innovative framework for disability-related issues in the period beyond the Decade. In resolution 48/99 the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to develop a long-term strategy to further the implementation of the World Programme. The resultant Long-term Strategy, presented to the Assembly at its forty-ninth session, was endorsed by it in resolution 49/153.

However, the data available suggest that few countries have established the medium-term targets for the period 1997-2002 envisaged in the Long-term Strategy. Some countries have still to establish a task force on national strategy and convene consultative forums; others have already formulated policy statements and set medium-term targets to achieve a society for all within the framework of national development plans; and disability issues are reflected in selected first country cooperation frameworks of the United Nations Development Programme.

Progress that occurred as a result of the Long-term Strategy may be attributed to two of its key characteristics. First, the Strategy focuses on establishing concrete targets to further implement the World Programme and on identifying indicators to measure progress made in achieving those targets. This is a significant consideration in the light of improvements that have occurred since the Decade in the quantitative bases for policy analysis, target setting and indicator construction in the disability field. The first edition of the United Nations Disability Statistics Compendium was based on data compiled in 1988 from 55 countries; version 2 of the disability statistics database of the Statistics Division of the United Nations Secretariat, currently under compilation, will cover more than 100 countries. Moreover, the Agenda for Action for the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 1993-2002, has identified regional targets for the immediate term and the medium term.

Secondly, the Strategy encourages countries to use flexibility, initiative and innovation in determining their own objectives, targets and indicators. While the data available do not suggest that such flexibility is resulting in the formulation of long-term country-level plans, as envisaged in the Stra-

tegy, there is evidence that a great number of countries are using bottom-up approaches to identify a range of practical disability targets appropriate to their own historical development experience, culture and conditions.

Progress that can be attributed to the Standard Rules

The second monitoring report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission for Social Development (A/52/56) on progress made in implementing the Standard Rules, considered by the General Assembly at its fifty-second session, focused on implications of findings for policy development, monitoring and evaluation from the disability perspective.

In the preparation of his second report, the Special Rapporteur obtained a good response rate from Governments and from the non-governmental community: 83 Governments submitted replies, as did 163 non-governmental organizations. Although the report is based on replies from Governments, it is important to note that data were available to the Special Rapporteur from 126 countries: the Governments of 30 countries provided replies for which there was no input from the non-governmental community, and non-governmental organizations in 43 countries submitted replies for which there was no governmental input.

The Special Rapporteur observed that although no country had fully implemented the Standard Rules, the data available suggested that the Rules were providing useful guidelines for the drafting of disability legislation, formulating national plans and evaluating programmes and policies. Nearly 85 per cent (70/83) of countries responding to the second monitoring questionnaire reported the existence of a national disability policy, which is a precondition for equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities; 81 per cent (64/79) of the responding countries reported that adoption of the Rules had led to governmental initiatives to promote awareness and provide information to support full participation and equality of persons with disabilities.

The data available suggest that the human rights of persons with disabilities have obtained added importance in the broader human rights framework in the period since the Decade. In 1996, the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities considered recent work of three treaty bodies of the United Nations concerning human rights and persons with disabilities: the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Committee on Economic and Cultural Rights and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. In addition, the Special Rapporteur on Disability in May 1996 submitted to the Subcommission a report on the social development aspects and human rights dimension of implementation of the Standard Rules.

Data on implementing the instrumental target areas for equal participation suggest that progress has been limited. The second monitoring report focused on the implementation of Rule 6 (Education) and Rule 7 (Employment), since those are the two substantive areas cited in the World Programme of Action as being important to the equalization of opportunities for disabled persons. With regard to Rule 6, data provided in cooperation with UNESCO indicate that a parent's role in decision-making on placement of children in special education is fully recognized in only 41 per cent of reporting countries (22/53). Children with special educational needs remain predominantly in separate educational systems; and rates of attendance are low in many countries. In over two thirds of the reporting countries (33/48), fewer than 1 per cent of the pupils are enrolled in special educational programmes; integration thus remains a goal for the future.

Similar findings are noted with regard to Rule 7 (Employment) and promotion of sustainable livelihoods for persons with disabilities in general. Data provided in cooperation with the International Labour Organization indicate that only one fifth of the countries report applying ILO Convention No. 159, on vocational rehabilitation and promotion of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities, in its entirety. The measures that are the least implemented relate to vocational rehabilitation in rural areas, cooperation with organizations of persons with disabilities and availability of qualified staff. However, almost every country reports implementing measures on anti-discriminatory employment.

Both sets of findings would suggest a greater focus on process than on outcome in the implementation of the Standard Rules. While the second round of monitoring finds progress in the policy and legislative areas, it is unclear how much progress is being achieved in improving the lives of disabled persons in instrumental target areas. Progress that has occurred as a result of the Rules can be attributed to the three characteristics cited by the Special Rapporteur. First, the Rules are concise and focus on a single topic—equalization of opportunities—which makes them understandable and accessible to both Governments and people with disabilities. Secondly, their focus on country-level action suggests areas in which disability advocates can press for implementation. Thirdly, the monitoring mechanism reinforces and assists advocacy efforts by the parties concerned.

Quantitative bases to assess progress and to identify obstacles in the implementation of the Programme

Data on disability have been actively compiled by the United Nations since the 1980s and were first published in 1990 as the Disability

Statistics Compendium. However, in the 15 years since the adoption of the World Programme of Action, a WHO estimate that over 500 million of the world's population are people with impairment or disability remains in wide use. Data on disability are significant by their absence in a recent review of data compendia of select development reports prepared by the World Bank and by bodies and organizations of the United Nations system. Notable exceptions are the selected disability data included in the UNDP *Human Development Report, 1997* and survey data in the UNICEF 1996 *Atlas of South Asian Children and Women*.

Data collection, analysis and methodological work by the Statistics Division of the United Nations Secretariat indicate a growing body of national data on disability in the period since the Decade, but also great differences in the methods used to identify persons with disabilities. There is need for international guidelines and standards for data collection on disability so that rates may be more comparable and more meaningful, both within and across countries. The Statistics Division of the United Nations Secretariat has worked to develop statistical methodology for data collection and compilation on the population with disability.

An area of special statistical concern pertains to the collection of data on disabilities associated with anti-personnel landmines and unexploded ordnance. Data available to the United Nations and from the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies suggest the existence of some 110 million anti-personnel landmines in more than 60 countries, which maim or kill an estimated 500 persons per week. From a development point of view, it costs an estimated 100 times more to remove a landmine than to place one. This is in addition to the indirect costs to society associated with lost productivity of those disabled by anti-personnel landmines and unexploded ordnance, and the direct costs of their care and rehabilitation. The Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat currently compiles three sets of non-parametric and qualitative data: demining programme reports in supported countries, country and area reports, and casualties and incidents.

Factors influencing implementation of the World Programme

The first review and appraisal identified three factors that had influenced the implementation of the World Programme at the mid-point of the Decade: resources, policies and institutional frameworks. These are considered below for a comparative analysis of trends.

1. **Resources framework: knowledge, people and skills, finances.** The global body of knowledge on disability issues has increased significantly in the period since the Decade. Advances in adaptive technologies and information and telecommunications capacities have resulted in new and expanded opportunities for accessibility and participation. These technological advances have been especially significant in fostering the establishment and development of virtual communities of interest. National capacity-building and methodological advances in the areas of early detection and rehabilitation are contributing to improved levels of living among children and young disabled persons. However, financial constraints resulting from continued low levels of growth in most areas of the world can influence the nature and pace of research and innovation in the field of disability. An appropriate priority for personnel, technical and financial resources to further the goals of full participation and equality remains an urgent concern. Data in *Human Development Report 1997* indicate that in 1990, the latest date for which there are comparable data, developing countries as a group allocated on average 2.1 per cent of gross domestic product to health; comparable data are not presented for the group of countries that are classified "industrialized".

2. **Policy framework.** The policy framework for the World Programme of Action encourages a tripartite approach to implementation and monitoring, which has continued with expanded participation by interested non-governmental organizations since the end of the Decade. Recognition in recent years of interaction between prevention, rehabilitation and equalization of opportunities has contributed to more effective implementation. Equating equalization of opportunity with the World Programme objectives on prevention and rehabilitation provided a framework for emergence of concern with the disability perspective in mainstream development and furthered analysis and design of disability-sensitive policies as well. The World Programme remains a valid and comprehensive framework for policy design and evaluation from the disability perspective.

3. **Institutional framework, including coordination mechanisms.** Interested bodies and organizations of the United Nations system continue to use inter-agency mechanisms for consultation and to promote coordinated action in support of the World Programme of Action in the period since the Decade. However, an emerging trend is for interested members of the system to undertake joint action on specific disability topics, sometimes in cooperation with interested non-governmental organizations. For instance, the Commission for Social Development, at its thirty-fifth session, was provided with a brief introduction to the joint cooperative effort of the United Nations and UNICEF with the Academy for International Education, a non-governmental or-

ganization, in the organization of the Global Workshop on Children with Disabilities (Washington, DC, 5-7 February 1997). The Commission's consideration of the item is reflected in the Economic and Social Council resolution (1997/19) on children with disabilities.

The continued development of the WHO International Classification of Impairments, Disabilities and Handicaps represents a critical area for coordinated action. The Classification plays a major role in the coding and development of classification schema. While efforts currently focus on increased standardization and use of less pejorative terms concerning people with disabilities, an emerging issue is the definition of environmental factors appropriate to traditional concerns. The Standard Rules note in this regard:

"The term handicap means the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the life of the community on an equal level with others. It describes the encounter between the person with a disability and the environment."

Although the term "handicap" has proved controversial, those elements that pertain to handicap within the WHO Classification—particularly independence, use of time, social integration and economic self-sufficiency—have proved beneficial in identifying areas of involvement that the World Programme must foster. Progress in implementing the World Programme has informed the Classification of the importance of environmental factors in enhancing or impeding equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities.

Two new coordination mechanisms have been introduced in the period since the end of the Decade: the Special Rapporteur on Disability, assisted by a panel of experts, promotes action, principally at the interregional level, in support of the Standard Rules, and the Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (1993-2002) provides a framework for promoting and coordinating action at the regional level.

Issues in the development of indicators on disability

Progress made in the development of statistics and indicators on disability

As recommended in the World Programme of Action, the Statistics Division of the United Nations Secretariat has continued to work towards the development of realistic and practical systems of data collection in countries and to prepare technical manuals and documents on how to collect such statistics. Substantive accomplishments of the Statistics Division in the period since the Decade include:

(a) The organization, in cooperation with the Central Bureau of Statistics of the Netherlands, of an expert group meeting on development of impairment, disability and handicap statistics (Voorburg, Netherlands, 7-11 November 1994). The meeting reviewed existing disability data-collection methods and standards and identified, in the light of that review, a set of guidelines for use in censuses, surveys and registration;

(b) Publication in 1995 of the *Manual for the Development of Statistical Information for Disability Programmes and Policies*. The Manual was written specifically for programme managers who produce and use statistical information to implement, monitor and evaluate disability policies and programmes. It was prepared in collaboration with the World Health Organization and received support from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and a grant from the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Disability;

(c) Inclusion of disability for the first time as a topic in the revision of the *Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses* for the year 2000 World Population and Housing Census Programme. The Statistical Commission, at its twenty-ninth session, endorsed the principles and recommendations and supported the new and revised sections;

(d) Preparation of a minimum set of impairment, disability and handicap (IDH) tabulations that should be produced with census data, on the prevalence of disability by sex, age, urban/rural residence and type of disability. Priority is to be accorded to presenting tabulations comparing persons with and without disablement on key social and economic characteristics. The set of IDH tabulations is included in the year 2000 census principles and recommendations.

(e) Continued work on a handbook on census and survey methods for the development of impairment, disability and handicap statistics. The handbook is intended for statistical offices and research organizations. It will provide them with guidelines on the collection of IDH statistics in censuses and surveys and their analysis and dissemination for policy purposes. Preparation of the handbook is supported by Statistics Netherlands and SIDA.

(f) Revisions and updating of the disability statistics database, with more user-friendly formats. As a first, practical step, indicators are under preparation on the prevalence of disability, within the framework of the International Classification, for dissemination on the Internet.

Information currently available for the development of indicators

National censuses represent a major source of disability data for many countries. Since the observation in 1981 of the International Year of Disabled Persons, the number of censuses collecting disability data has increased significantly. According to information available to the Statistics

Division, in 1970, fewer than 20 countries included disability questions in the national population census; in the 1980 round, the number had increased to nearly 60, and for the 1990 round to over 80 countries.

In assessing the state of disability statistics in 1980, the World Programme of Action noted that data on education and employment status of people with disabilities were important for assessing equalization of opportunities. Few countries produce census tabulations on education and employment for the population with disabilities. This issue is addressed in recent recommendations for the year 2000 census on specifications for the tabulation plan for disability data. Special attention is directed to presenting tabulations comparing persons with and without disabilities on key social and economic characteristics.

The International Labour Organization collects data on the monitoring of ILO Convention No. 159 and has received data from the 54 countries that have ratified the Convention. Since 1980, UNESCO has collected data on practices in special education; its latest review, 1993-1994, contains data for 52 countries.

Issues in monitoring and data collection

Four issues emerge from efforts by the United Nations to monitor and to collect and compile official national data on the progress made and obstacles in Programme implementation. First, although comprehensive monitoring of all aspects of the environment as it facilitates the achievement or hindrance of all three objectives of the World Programme of Action is clearly important, few countries systematically collect data on environmental variables. Likewise, the areas of life where the environment can hinder equalization of opportunity, such as independence, use of time, social integration, economic self-sufficiency and life-cycle transitions, have also not been systematically measured. Thirdly, resource constraints can hinder collection of data on important topics related to disability. Fourthly, the success of certain data collection efforts under resource-scarce conditions suggests the wisdom of setting clear priorities in any data collection effort.

Data collection efforts cannot be viewed in isolation from the overall aims of United Nations programmes in the social and economic sectors. Options selected to improve the monitoring of programme implementation, including development of indicators to measure and assess programme progress, must focus on expected outcomes of the respective programme goals and objectives. If the measures of programme efforts demonstrate apparent success but desired outcomes are not achieved, an assessment of the particular determinants of expected outcomes is critical. Environmental determinants of programme performance and critical areas of life are often difficult to measure when resources are scarce, particularly in a census. The paradox is that measures of whether persons with disabilities are empowered to take independent decisions in their lives, to exercise control over their use of time, to plan and decide on the use of economic resources and to prepare for major life-cycle changes represent the types of indicators that can predict whether desired outcomes are being achieved.

There is an observed tendency for the information collected on disability to relate more to topics where the data are perceived to be the most accurate and not to those where data may be difficult to obtain. Often this perception has reflected a social welfare rather than a social development perspective, since data related to prevention and rehabilitation are often viewed as more reliable than data on equalization of opportunities issues. Collection of such information serves to reinforce a social welfare perspective rather than pinpoint those areas that need to be addressed to bring forth meaningful social change. Thus, care must be taken to assure that the priorities for collecting data do not become the priorities for social policy. As policies encompassing universal design, empowerment of persons with disabilities as development agents, and human rights are adopted, those policies should influence decisions on disability indicators.

In the broader context of monitoring and evaluating progress in policy areas covered in recent major United Nations conferences, it might be noted that, at its twenty-ninth session, the Statistical Commission considered the recommendations of an expert group on a list of 15 indicators to form a suggested "minimum national social data set (MNSDS)". The MNSDS would cover population and development, poverty eradication, employment, social integration and the status of women and men, but not persons with disabilities.

Action by the General Assembly (resolution 52/82)

On 12 December 1997, the General Assembly adopted the following resolution:

52/82. Implementation of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons: towards a society for all in the twenty-first century

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 37/52 of 3 December 1982, by which it adopted the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, and 49/153 of 23 December 1994 and 50/144 of 21 December 1995, in which it called upon Governments, when implementing the World Programme of Action, to take into account the elements suggested in the Long-term Strategy to Implement the

World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons to the Year 2000 and Beyond.

Recalling also its resolution 48/96 of 20 December 1993, by which it adopted the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities,

Welcoming the inclusion of measures to address questions of disability in the programmes, plans and platforms for action adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993, the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held at Istanbul, Turkey, from 3 to 14 June 1996,

Mindful of the need to adopt and implement effective public policies and programmes to promote the rights of person with disabilities,

Convinced that the end of the century provides an opportunity for considering which issues to address in order to implement fully the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities,

Welcoming initiatives to hold international conferences related to disabled persons, in particular the holding of the Fifth World Assembly of Disabled Peoples' International at Mexico City in December 1998, on the theme "Towards an inclusive twenty-first century",

Recognizing the importance of timely and reliable data on disability for disability-sensitive policies, programme planning and evaluation, and the need for further development of practical statistical methodology for data collection and compilation on populations with disabilities,

1. *Takes note* with appreciation of the report of the Secretary-General on the third quinquennial review and appraisal of the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, and welcomes the conclusions and recommendations contained therein;

2. *Takes note* of Economic and Social Council resolutions 1997/19 of 21 July 1997 on equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities and 1997/20 of 21 July 1997 on children with disabilities;

3. *Notes with appreciation* the valuable work undertaken by the Special Rapporteur for monitoring the implementation of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities of the Commission for Social Development, and welcomes the second round of monitoring the implementation of the Standard Rules, the cooperation of the Special Rapporteur with the Commission on Human Rights, and especially with the Committee on the Rights of the Child;

4. *Encourages* Governments and the non-governmental community to examine key social and economic policy issues related to the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities, in particular, (*a*) accessibility, (*b*) social services and social safety nets, and (*c*) employment and sustainable livelihoods;

5. *Urges* Governments to cooperate with the Statistics Division of the Secretariat in the continued development of global statistics and indicators, and encourages them to avail themselves of the technical assistance of the Division, as needed;

6. *Urges* relevant bodies and organizations of the United Nations system, including relevant treaty bodies, such as the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the regional commissions, and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and institutions, to work closely with the United Nations in the promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities by sharing experiences and findings on disability issues;

7. *Decides* that the next quinquennial review and appraisal of the World Programme of Action, in 2002, shall consider the issues mentioned in paragraph 4 above;

8. *Invites* Governments, concerned non-governmental organizations and the private sector to continue to support the United Nations Voluntary Fund on Disability with a view to providing additional support to the implementation of the Standard Rules, including further assistance in national capacity-building and support for the work of the Special Rapporteur;

9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to develop a plan to increase the accessibility of the United Nations and its offices and meetings to person with disabilities;

10. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session, through the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-seventh session, a report on the implementation of the present resolution.